# FACT SHEET

APRIL 1, 2014

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

# Riverside Ground Water Contamination

## Federal Programs Section – Site Investigation Program

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**Background:**

- In 2012, vinyl chloride and other chlorinated ground water contamination was discovered in several wells of the Riverside and White River municipal well fields. Vinyl chloride is a chemical compound with a mild, sweet odor, which can be in a liquid or gas state. Vinyl chloride is a manufactured substance that does not occur naturally.
- The well field provides drinking water to over 10,000 residents in Indianapolis.
- Since the time that vinyl chloride had been initially detected, the city of Indianapolis drinking water has been tested and found to contain no contamination.
- Working under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. EPA, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has decided to investigate the ground water contamination discovered in Indianapolis. This investigation will help IDEM to determine future actions needed to mitigate possible impacts from the contamination.

**2014 Riverside Ground Water Contamination Investigation:**

- In the summer of 2014, IDEM's Site Investigation Program will be conducting a soil and ground water investigation in Indianapolis.
- The objective of this investigation is to identify potential sources of the ground water contamination near the Riverside and White River municipal well fields.
- IDEM staff will be using a direct push sampling device to obtain subsurface soil and ground water samples. Ground water samples will also be collected from the municipal wells and from some established monitoring wells.
- IDEM staff may request access to private property in various locations to collect ground water and soil samples from businesses to aid in this investigation. There is no charge associated with these samples, and property owners will be provided with the sample results from the samples collected from their property. In some cases IDEM staff will collect soil and ground water samples within the right of way of private properties.

**Environmental Impact:**

- Vinyl chloride is a manufactured chemical that is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC). PVC is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire, cable coatings, and packaging materials.
- Vinyl chloride is also a breakdown product of other chemicals, such as tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene, which are used in dry cleaning and industrial degreasing activities.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has determined that vinyl chloride is a known carcinogen. Studies in workers who have breathed vinyl chloride over many years show an increased risk of liver, brain and lung cancer, and some cancers of the blood have also been observed in workers. The effects of drinking high levels of vinyl chloride are unknown.
- People can be exposed to vinyl chloride from ingesting contaminated water used for drinking, cooking, and bathing (showering), and from breathing vinyl chloride that has been released from plastics industries, hazardous waste sites, and landfills. A contaminated water supply can also impact indoor air quality in the home as vinyl chloride gases can be released from water during bathing, cooking, and laundry activities.
- Along with this fact sheet, IDEM is distributing the *ToxFAQs™ for Vinyl Chloride* fact sheet from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry that describes vinyl chloride and its effects in more detail. A copy of *ToxFAQs™ for Vinyl Chloride* may be obtained by contacting IDEM Project Manager Mark Jaworski at the e-mail address provided under the Additional Information section, below, or on ATSDR's website at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=281&tid=51.

## IDEM's Role:

- IDEM is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- IDEM's Site Investigation Program works to assess potential environmental hazards and prioritize contaminated sites for further needed actions. Once the sample results have been evaluated, IDEM Site Investigation Program staff and management will make a decision regarding future actions.
- IDEM staff will be available to answer questions and address concerns of residents and businesses.

## Citizens' Role:

- Indianapolis businesses can assist the State of Indiana, where requested, by allowing IDEM to take ground water and/or soil samples from their place of business. These samples may require the use of a direct push sampling device. The direct push sampler is a tracked vehicle approximately the size of a small car. IDEM will take the necessary precautions to avoid damaging property or landscaping. If monitoring wells are present on your property, ground water from these wells will be obtained utilizing a rotary low flow pump.
- Access to private property will allow IDEM to sample the ground water and subsurface soil at various locations in the Indianapolis area to better identify the extent of contamination. Left unaddressed, the ground water contamination may become more widespread and pose a more significant threat in the future.

## Additional Information:

- For questions and concerns regarding IDEM's environmental investigation in the Indianapolis area, please contact Mark Jaworski, IDEM Project Manager, at (317) 233-2407, toll free at (800) 451-6027, ext. 3-2407, or by e-mail at mjaworski@idem.in.gov.
- For health-related questions, contact:
  - The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at (312) 886-1462.
  - The Marion County Health Department at (317) 221-2266.
- For media inquiries, contact Barry Sneed, IDEM Public Information Officer, at (317) 232-8596, toll free at (800) 451-6027, ext. 2-8596, or by e-mail at bsneed@idem.IN.gov
- For more information about IDEM's Site Investigation Program, please visit IDEM's website at www.idem.IN.gov/4143.htm